Let the lamb rise, Let the devil reign

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by SchilesNoise

Summary

“Our nightmares are often depicted as our minds conjuring fear from the waking world or from a memory buried so deep into our unconsciousness. Tell me Will, does the nightmare that haunts your mind appear even with your mind fully awake?”

“I would rather not get psychoanalyzed about thoughts that ran around my head in a cell Doctor Lecter.”

“Need may I remind you that this is your time, whether we are in our office or an unsanitary room.”

“Do I also need to remind you that we got kidnapped by some cultist from god knows where?”

~~
Or

After the confrontation with Hobbs, Will is encouraged to do one session with Dr. Hannibal Lecter who Alana suggested to help with his nightmare and increasingly morbid thoughts. But then a cult kidnapped him and the doctor with the purpose of fulfilling their vision. A vision that has a relation to Will's nightmares.

Notes

Hi there! This is my first Hannibal fanfic (and also my first ever fandom fanfic) after a lot of encouragement from a friend and now here we are! I'm still working with how the tags work and how to create a better summary but please bear with me.

Comments and criticism are encouraged! I'm hoping to learn more from what you all think. Also English is not my first language but please tell me if there are incorrect grammars in here.

Chapter 1

Piercing wind softly touches his warm skin. The brush of thin branches and sways of large barks can be heard nearby him. Curiously, he opened his piercing blue eyes and remained in his position. Standing. Waiting. Waiting for what exactly? He doesn't know. Not yet.

Looking far away from where he waits, the void stares. There's nothing beyond there, nothing but hollow trees and animal howls. Turning back reveals the same conclusion, the dark beyond. He's curious about what lies in the darkness, what happens when stepping into the void? Is waiting an acceptable action? Is there something waiting for him there?

His head shook down, brunette curls bouncing. Eyes remained in the ground for a minute then he took a single step. Nothing happens.

Eyes staring at his feet, bare with dirt from soil and dead leaves and yet not a single footprint can be seen around his perimeter other than his first step earlier. His heart beats faster than average.

Without any evidence of the benefits of remaining where he stands, he took another step. And another. Looking back at his back reveals nothing.

He walks.

He walks not knowing the direction he's heading. His heart beats like a slow drum, whether from adrenaline or fear he doesn't know.

Countless minutes of walking seems doing nothing of his current predicament. He's in the woods in his boxers and what seems to be rag-like clothes. He breathes deeply, inhaling the cold wind. No wonder he feels the chills of the cold.

Then a female scream tore the silence of the woods. Suddenly he is running towards the direction of the noise. His legs hurt for walking barefoot for minutes, maybe hours. He has

not accounted for his time here.

The screeches get louder and louder the nearer he goes towards the direction of the scream. The moment he reaches what seems to be a clearing the scream is gone. He look left and right but what remains straight ahead are antlers. Stag antlers. He walks towards it, feeling like he is getting pulled by the mere thought of the large appendages.

A meter away from it and he blinks. Stag antlers remain but a top of it is a body. A woman pierced by the antlers. And below is a pool of fresh blood. Casie Boyle. The copycat, but not the exact one. His heart beat faster. His eyes blown wide making the blues disappear.

A foot apart between the tableau and him. A touching distance. He slowly raises his own hand towards it, grasping, feeling until he reaches the tips of the antlers. It is hard. Cold. Terrifying. Exhilarating...

While his eyes are transfixed in the image of the tableau, a soft, warm breath is felt in the back of his neck. This should alarm him but what he feels is a sense of warmth and safety. A dark sense of comfort of the unknown.

Turning his eyes away from the tableau and looking at the mystery behind him, he is stared by a stag. A large majestic creature whose skin is filled with feathers as black as a raven's color.

He looked towards its torso onto his eyes. Inky black eyes stared back. Eyes are the windows of the soul and those eyes pierce unto his soul, begging it to show himself to it. Reveal what's underneath it. His heart beats a moment faster.

He cannot take his eyes from the stag. A moment of staring with the creature then he glimpse a look of familiarity that shows in its eyes. It knows me, he thought. A hand reached the snout of the mammal unconsciously. I knew it, he concluded.

The creature remains in its place, standing. Moving its eyes from him towards something behind him. He looks back to the tableau only to reveal a person. A girl. Long brunette hair with the eyes of a fawn. The one he failed to save.

Abigail Hobbs staring at him with her pleading eyes. He knows this is not real. This is just a figment of his imagination. Was this a dream? A nightmare? And yet everything feels real. Anything is possible. His heart pounds.

A soft whine is heard beside him. The stag is now on his side, nosing his arm. Out of thin air a knife appears on his dominant hand. His heart aches.

It is now looking at him intently. Watching. Waiting. He knows what it is waiting for. What it wanted for him to do.

He silently stares at those onyx eyes then to the knife he's holding., suddenly appearing out of thin air The knife presses warm in his hand, a feeling of familiarity crawls within him. Begging for him to use it. Fear rushes in his veins. No, not fear. Something primal is what he felt under his flesh.

Please, his mind says wanted to convey it to the stag. Eyes darting between the gleaming knife and the terrified look of Abigail. There is something he needs *to do. Something underneath all those feelings he buried feets deep into his mind he knew why he needs it, why he–*

He does not want to name that feeling. Naming it would make it a reality.

Do you truly fear it? *An inhuman voice vibrates in his perimeter. He shook his head. This is not real, he repeated in his mind.*

Fear yourself?

The voice reverberated in the woods. Echoing the thoughts towards him. His hand shook as he clenched the knife handle deeply into his palm. He shut his eyes hardly, denying the thought and the image of his desires. A sudden memory came at him, a forgotten yet vivid memory of his childhood…

The fear of feeling raw flesh against the palm of your hand?

Small hands clinging into something. Soft, moist, foreign in the hands of a child. Everything was red, the walls, the floor, his hands. His mouth contorts…

The want clinging in your very soul?

The stag looks at him, staring at him with eyes changed from the color of onyx back to bright purple. Its mouth opens wide revealing razor sharp teeth. Sharp to bite. Sharp to gnaw.

There is no need to fear what's been deep within

It slowly approaches his ear, warm mist enveloped his own being at the proximity of the being.. It gently whispers…

Free yourself.

He knows he can, he knows he wants *to . His insides are begging for him to be released. To feel the texture in his bare hands, to cling to the copper smell that covers every part of his peripheral vision.*

But he won't. He shook his head, in denial of what his heart desires. What he wanted does not deserve to see the light of day. He has chained, locked, buried it deep within the recesses of his mind. He swore he will never feel that again, swore that he'll never let it out.

You would choose to cage yourself, like a lion roaming on an empty, small kennel?

Yes. Letting it out is better than letting it roam free. Free to choose. Free to hunt. He whispered. Letting a wild animal free would prove to be disastrous, for him and for everyone.

He knew letting go would be catastrophic. Catastrophic in what way? He doesn't know but he can feel it. The want it emmits through his veins.

You've tasted a glimpse before and tasted a glimpse now. It will be futile.

He knows this fact. But he will not let go. Deep within him he knew that there remains a light in his heart and he will clutch into it even if it means he will be alone in this fight of himself.

He stands his ground, firm in his place and looks at the stag face to face. Eyes shining purple now rather than the previous void. No emotion shows at the face of the mammal, like a stone statue observing in silence to its surroundings.

You deserve more and yet you still shoulder the burden of fear.

Not only do you show fear of yourself but the fear of being alone.

Not wanting to hear anymore thoughts from the being he tried to shake his head. Free hands clutching his hair, pulling to gain solid stability in this place. His eyes are shutted tight, try to drain all the events that happened just now. Shaking all the remaining adrenaline that comes from the meeting. As the world slowly evaporates, one last voice is heard.

Soon you'll never be alone again with the power you hold…

Soon you'll choose it just as I chose you…

Soon, Will…

~~

Will woke up shaking, bed sheets soaked in his sweat. His head pounds like he just got hit by a full punch of a boxer. He turns, looking at the time; past 3 in the morning. Too early to wake up, a bit late to sleep more.

Buster immediately jumps into the bed the moment he sees Will in distress, licking him in his face, seeming to comfort him. Normally Will doesn't allow his dogs on his bed but he'll make a special exception to the Jack Russel for today.

Getting up and putting Buster down the bed, the mutt yaps, which makes the remaining dogs alert on the sudden sound. Not wanting to awaken his other dogs, Will silently pet Buster to calm him down and to let him sleep again. They deserve a good sleep after a day of him staying at Minnesota, leaving them here with Alana occasionally feeding them when he asks if she's available to look out for his dogs.

Will rubs his head, doing deep breaths to calm himself. Ever since the Hobbs case, the nightmares just keep getting worse. It doesn't help when he is a moment late when Garret Jacob Hobbs sliced his daughter's throat deeply. Will has shot all his rounds unto the older Hobbs, precision and accuracy be damned, which result in Will killing Hobbs. Unfortunately for the younger Hobbs, the blood flowed quickly. His hands, shaking and bloody, did not do its job properly of controlling the loss of blood as Abigail's breath slowly diminished in every second that passed. Her body loses its warmth and goes stiff as Will tries to stop the bleeding, knowing it is a futile attempt.

Will is no stranger to horrifying nightmares that terrorizes him every other night. Given his job as a criminal psychology professor and occasional consultant, he looks at gore multiple times a day. He even teaches his class on interpreting meaning on corpses on a daily basis!

But this case is the first time he aimed a gun at a person, pulled a trigger at them, and apprehend the suspect in an ongoing case. Legally, there is no problem shooting at a suspected criminal with the reason that the suspect is holding a hostage or would retaliate in any form. But questions will be asked if you emptied a whole magazine just by stopping a soon to be criminal. And by stopping it means killing them.

Since the day Will killed Garett Jacob Hobbs he can't remove the memory of blood splattered walls and red tinted floors from his nightmares. But what he cannot forget is the action of

pulling the trigger that day.

The first round is just the means of stopping the man. The second is for the certainty of apprehending him. But all the remaining bullets stand for a different purpose. As soon as the third bullet was pulled he felt a tingling sensation in his chest. An all-too familiar feeling of liberation and righteousness.

And Will pulled again and again and again. Till all 10 bullets are wasted and used.

What horrifies him the most was what he felt after. Not one sane person would feel good after killing. No one would even say that killing felt natural to them. But that's what he felt that day. Natural. Powerful.

He shouldn't feel that way. He knows he shouldn't but he cannot remove that feeling from himself.

As the train of thought progresses he remembered his nightmare just a while ago. Abigail Hobbs standing in a clearing and the Ravenstag.

All he remembered was the scared look of Abigail Hobbs, eyes wide like a deer in a headlights and the stag in his side huffing its snout near his face, whispering promises of what he remembered would be acceptance and fear.

As his eyes opened, Will looked to the corner of the room. Garret Jacob Hobbs image flickers, its jagged eyes and gunshot wounds oozes blood. *See?*

Will got up on his bed, gently going to the kitchen to brew his daily coffee, getting ready for his classes later. No use on remembering what he wanted to forget for a long time now.

As Will Graham gets ready for his day, a shadow in the woods seemingly watches him with sinister eyes. Its cloak is dyed black with a shade of purple. The shadowed man looked at Will from afar and then towards the woods. Two more shadowed figures emerged silently.

"We'll bring the chosen tonight. Gather the rejects in the same place."

As the hooded figures nodded they walked away. They had a vision to follow.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

> Not beta read so if there are grammatical errors or plot continuity errors, please let me know.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I'm not going to be comfortable with anybody inside my head."

Will's classes just finished and his head is aching badly. He brought aspirin on him everywhere he goes because of his killer headache and right now he would want to dry swallow a pill or two just to lessen the pounding in his brain. Not that Jack and Alana's "ambush" helped to relieve the pain he is currently in.

He did appreciate Alana's warning beforehand, a warning of confrontation between Jack and him and without hap hazarding a guess on why the head of BAU is here, it's definitely about the reason his class applauded him the moment he entered his classroom which is uncomfortable and inappropriate in his opinion.

Even if Alana's intentions are genuine, it does not remove his annoyance at being the topic of discussion. Jack wanted him to get psych eval for his oh so successful apprehension of Hobbs and Alana's concerning look that borders on pitying definitely does not meshed well.

"Will, you never killed someone before. It's a traumatizing experience and it's a lot to take in such a small amount of time." Alana's concern bleeds into her words. Willing to help a friend but would rather keep the professionalism between them.

Will wondered if it was traumatizing. In regards to what transpired in Minnesota then it was indeed traumatizing. That is, to a stable human being. But that's the reason he's not an FBI agent and why he consults and does not do field work. Too unstable to pass the evaluation. But that moment in the house, he never felt traumatized in a way.

"I used to work homicide before."

"And the reason you're not in homicide right now was you couldn't stomach pulling the trigger on a suspect.” Jack punctuated the last phrase with stress. “Will, you just shot Hobbs ten times." And by that tone of Jack's voice it definitely shows concern. And a hint of guilt?

"The psych eval's not for formality then?"

"No, it's so I can get a solid eight hours of sleep tonight.” Jack deadpanned. “I ask you to be close to this case and you did. But I need to know that you're not getting close anymore, not after what happened."

Will removed his eyeglass then proceeded to enveloped his palm unto his forehead. Another killer headache is coming. "Jack, you know that therapy doesn't work on me. Didn't work before and definitely will not work now. I know all the tricks in it." Will emphasized. Showing that he has a hundred percent no intention on doing therapy, especially not on an FBI sanctioned office.

"Then un-learn some tricks."

Feeling the heating tension between Jack and Will, Alana intervened, "Instead of treating it as therapy, why not try seeing it as someone to have conversations with?" Her blue eyes stared at them intently, trying to cool down the tension between the two. "I have a colleague in Baltimore that handles difficult cases so he's not the typical kind of psychiatrist. And he’s not new to this kind of work.”

With them listening closely to her suggestion, Alana continues. “He's a bit unorthodox when it comes to therapy but I think he could overlook the situation. I could ask him if he can free a slot for you." She pauses for a second, looking like she's second-guessing herself whether to continue or not. And after a moment of thinking, she speaks softly, "And Will, he could help with the nightmares."

With Jack halting his pushing, Will considered Alana's offer. Therapy really does not work on him not because he knows all the tricks but because he knows what tricks will be used by the

psychiatrist. Not that he wanted to but he cannot just turn off his empathy in these cases.

Jack and Alana's staring at him now, seemingly boring holes into his skull, waiting for a response or a consideration. And with a deep breath he sighs, accepting defeat for now and not wanting to hurt Alana's feelings. "Fine. What's his name?"

Alana beamed with the answer. She proceeds to get her purse and retrieves a piece of call card. "His name is Hannibal Lecter. His office is also in Baltimore and with what I know on his schedule, I think you can get a slot with him at 7 pm if you're fine with it.."

Taking the call card he noticed how elegantly it was made. The handwritten phone number in it shows how fluent their hands are when writing cursive. It's almost perfect. On the card it shows "Dr. Hannibal Lecter M.D, RPsy" and below is the location.

Will stared at the card, looking considerate of the so-called Doctor Lecter. After a long stare, Jack did a fake cough getting his attention. "I take it that you'll go?"

As much as he wanted to glare at Jack for even making him agree to Alana's suggestion, Will just deadpanned, stared at him and grumbled a response. “Yes. But I'm doing this once.” He noted, with putting more emphasis on the word once.

“As long as I can get my beauty sleep.” With an uptick of a smile on Jack’s face and Alana’s content smile. Will exited the classroom with a heavy sigh, getting ready for a confrontation with a doctor tonight.

~~

Although he had agreed on going to the doctor to have "conversations" as Alana suggested, Will considered not going to the appointment. He never needed a shrink to help him handle the nightmares that plague his night, he definitely didn't need a shrink to help him handle the consequences of his actions on the case.

But seeing Alana at least happy for him and Jack not bothering him for a while is reason enough to go to therapy. Might as well go and check the doctor himself.

After the ambush in his classroom this morning he went straight to his home, wanting a rest and to remove the thought of even going to the shrink. He sped a bit just to reach Wolf Trap much earlier, tickets be damn.

The moment he reached the border to Wolf Trap the back of his nape shivered. It is just past afternoon and the weather felt cooler than usual with the possibility of a rain or a shower. The wind hollows through the deep woods and as he looks at the vastness of the forest he has a feeling of either running away from the woods, escaping whatever there is, and running towards it, wanting to chase something that lurks in the darkness. But most importantly, he feels he is being watched by someone. Or something?

He shakes his head lightly. It's getting closer to winter and that might be the reason his neck is shivering intensely. He drove uneventfully, eventually arriving at his home.

As he steps inside, getting assaulted by his pack, Will can't remove the thought of looking back to the woods.

There's this sense of yearning that sips into his soul everytime he looks at the woods. As a child, he and his dad would go town to town, state to state to search for a living. It is a tough life for the both of them with his dad on a search for a job fixing motors and Will being the new kid in every school.

Although they traveled a lot in his early years, they mostly stayed in rural areas. And sometimes these places have their own forests and swamps. Staying there, observing nature would calm his anxious mind, making peace with his surroundings.

He has lived most of his childhood staying at those woods when his dad was not at their temporary shelter, working various jobs. He has seen different creatures in the woods. Those creatures range from prey to predator which piques little Will's interest. Watching wolves chasing deers, hawks grabbing rabbits, it sparks something in him that wants to experience the chase, the hunt.

Then he saw the stag.

Reminding himself of getting rest before the inevitable therapy, he whistled for his dogs to come in, shaking all those thoughts away for now. He prepared their meal, pre-cooked to give him some time on assembling their foods. He waited for them to sit silently, waiting for Will to put their meal in their respective bowls. After being behaved for a few seconds he then served their meal, hearing their content yaps and joyful grumbling.

Thinking about the idea of napping for a few hours does not bode well on Will. The shaking and sweating still fresh in his mind. Mind made up of being awake for the rest of the afternoon, he stay outside, sitting on his porch and watching his dogs run.

Time passed fluidly and the same feeling he felt on the border reoccurred. His eyes moved from the dogs into the woods. Watching for unusual movement coming from the trees beyond.

It is uncommon for different beings to come and go into his backyard. He's living in the middle of nowhere so that comes with free forest being just walking near his house. In fact he saw his handful of bears and wolves pass and fortunately not aggressive to disturb the peace Will is living in his home.

However, this feeling Will felt now and before certainly does not come from a being of the forest. Too focused, too certain, too involved to a certain hermit living away from civilization.

Will thought of it being a human. Thinking back if he orders an online delivery before but turns out nothing. He thought of a certain sneaky redhead but thinks that she has no reason to stalk this much if she wanted to take a candid picture of him. Neighbors? Obviously there isn't.

With the thought of someone looking at him, it makes his skin crawl uncomfortably. He might be overreacting too much if he thought he had a stalker. Will Graham? The introverted

professor who owns seven dogs has a stalker? What a thought that was.

Will might need a rest if he’s thinking way too much, especially if he’s thinking that someone would intentionally go in the middle of nowhere in Wolftrap. Much more for being stalked..

He looked at the time as sees it half past four. Still got time for a short nap.

If he's going to get psychoanalyzed for an hour of his evening then he might as well get rested. With the final thought, he closes his eyes and surprisingly. sleep has come at him fast.

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The scent of earth and moist permeated into the chilly air and went straight into his senses. With the strong scent of nature Will blinked from his previous shutted eyes. The woods are dark with only the shine of the moonlight the only reason he sees his surroundings.

He shivered as he felt the wind touch his skin. The cold is making his senses numb. He felt like his whole body had been in this position for hours. He looked back and forth, looking for a sign of life in his surroundings. There was nothing, save for the sway of the leaves and small crunches of the trees. With his feet feeling numb by standing at the soil for who knows how long, he stepped forward.

He has no idea where his footsteps bring but the woods are familiar to him. He walked for minutes, letting his own body move in an instinctual manner.

A sudden thought overcomes him and he brings himself into a stop. He looked down and noticed a familiar step imprinted onto the moist soil. A footprint. And not just any kind of footprint from an animal. Not paws but hooves.

He looked back and noticed the same brand of footprints. He has been following the route of this hooved being, presumably either a deer or a stag. Curiously, he continued his walking and followed the footprints. As he followed the footprints, a feeling of being stared at suddenly felt at his nape, making himself involuntarily shivered. He turned his back and noticed figures, multiple figures, hiding behind the thickness of the trees.

The figures are difficult to stare at in the evening sky. But as he squinted to focus on the figures he noticed that they have a humanoid shape. Persons cloaked in darkness with their features hidden behind their clothing. He notices that there are at least 5 of them staring at him. It unnerved him.

As Will continues to stare at them, the cloaked figures begin to move forward, forward unto him.

Not knowing their intentions of closing the gap between them, he tried averting his eyes to those figures to run away from these mysterious beings. But his body refused to move. His heart beat a minute faster.

Slowly as the hooded figures are minutes away from him his mind is running a mile a minute, thinking of a possible escape to avoid the confrontation. But then a sudden warmth is felt in his shivering arm.

Will looked at his side and noticed the stag trying to move his arm, it's nozzle wet. He tried focusing on grounding himself with the stag in which he failed to notice that the figures surrounded him.

The figures have formed a circle around him and the stag. Then suddenly one by one they fall into their knees, all except one.

Still standing, Will's body shakes from fear, or what he assumes to be fear. With what was happening around him, he felt caged. He wanted to turn around, wanted to shut his thoughts. His heart beats a lot faster.

After a moment later the cloaked man is in front of him standing, waiting, staring.

With the man within distance of him, he looked at the person in front of him. A man, male, what looked to be in his late 20s or early 30s, pale, no distinct features that can be seen in the man's face. From his point of view, the man is as plain and ordinary as he can be. Until he saw the eyes.

The man's eyes are filled with nothing. His eyes blank that show no true purpose, no emotion, no soul. A blank slate.

His eyes averted to the stag, its onyx eyes now shining a deep purple. The stag walked towards the man then stared at it. The air suddenly felt a lot colder than before with the stag standing in front of the man.

Then the stag puts its snout onto the man's forehead. All of the sudden the man moves like he has been electrocuted, the man shaking uncontrollably.

All Will can do is stare at the scene. The stag moved aside as he now stared at the man that had stopped moving. A light then shines towards his eyes blinding him. Then the man suddenly tackled him.

The sudden action shocked Will as he tried to avert a punch the man was pulling. Will pushed the man as hard as he could, shoving the man aside. But the man immediately stands, putting up a stance and revealing a knife in his left hand.

His heart beat a moment faster.

The appearance of the knife changes the action Will is thinking. All thoughts of running and escaping are pushed aside and adrenaline gives way.

All he thought was to get that knife away from the man.

The stag watching the scene with its glowing purple eyes, seeming entertained and curious by the situation. The creature watched Will intimately, like it's waiting for something, waiting for an action to be made.

The man once again pounced on him. Will tried grabbing the man's hand, trying to get the knife away from his attacker but to no avail with the hand tightly wrapped unto the hand.

As he focused on disarming the man he's vulnerable to any attack. The man then punched him in the stomach and onto his sides. With the continuous hits he would definitely lose.

That won't do.

He scrambled for control, waiting for the right moment then grabbing the mans arm and twisted it backwards. The scream that comes from the man makes his heart flutter with pleasure. His heart beats faster with anticipation. He would put this man to his place.

Will stands, raw determination and adrenaline flows with him. But there's also something that's pushing him. A feeling of power that can be felt through violence. He felt it by breaking the man's arm.

He wanted to feel that again.

Unknown to Will, his deep blue eyes are being mixed with a light violet. Eyes looking like the sky every sunset.

Will pushed the man backwards making the man fall to his back. The man tried regaining the upper hand he once held but Will is the one in control. The one who will deal with him with violence and righteousness.

He grabbed the man's hair and slammed into the hard soil. The hit is hard enough for the man to hurt but not hard enough to get unconscious. Oh no, he wanted the man to feel every bit of pain he'll allow him to feel.

Remembering the knife the man holds, he picks it up from where the knife has fallen. He looked at the knife with curiosity and glee. Then he looked at the man. The facial expression the man exhibits shows fear, anger, and pure terror.

He stabbed the man in his shoulder blade, wanting to inflict pain not injury. The man screams but Will does not hear it as he is too focused on the blood. Blood flows through the man's cloak covered arm. He slashed the cloth covering the skin and there he saw the dark liquid flowing like water from the mountain. His heart flustered with glee and joy. His eyes dilated as he watched the blood rush through the wound. He wanted to see that again.

Another stabbed is made unto the other and hears another painful wail from the man. He grabbed the man's throat and squeezed it, making the wail sound like a whimper. With the knife still on hand he placed the knife on the man's jugular and slashed it as smooth as butter. Blood spurted everywhere, getting it from his hands to his face. The burgundy liquid feels warm on his skin. He puts his hand unto the flesh of the man's jugular and buried it deep. He could still feel the pulse of the man slowly disappearing.

His breathing deeply and fast, eyes dilated that would rival the full moon. He knows what he did. It's wrong, so so wrong. But he can't stop himself. He does not know if he wanted to.

Then don't.

Will jerked his head unto the stag. Suddenly its form is mutating. Its hooves turn into arms with claws, its body enlarging, its back legs turning something like the body of a wolf but much larger. It's antlers grow an inch bigger and its mouth turns razor sharp teeth. It looked nightmarish, but not to Will.

Do you feel their warmth of their blood?

Yes, yes, oh how he wanted to feel the wet feeling in his skin, how it warmed him.

How did you do it?

I slashed him, aiming for the painful spots. He deserves what's coming the moment he tackled me.

Yes he deserves what's coming just as you deserve to receive my offering to you my chosen.

With blood still caked on his forearm, Will stands in front of the nightmarish stag. Wide-eyed with the look of adoration and ecstasy, he walked near it. The man's corpse is temporarily forgotten.

The crowd circling them slowly morphed into stags, all of them slowly walking towards them. Then the nightmarish stag looked at Will with revenance.

Do you want to feel this again?

"Yes", Will breathes unevenly, adrenaline still fills his veins. He feels alive like this. He needed, no, wanted to feel the blood coat his fingers, hear the scream of pain like a symphony, and he didn't want to stop wanting it.

Just you wait, and you'll feel this again. Let the chains break within you.

And you'll finally be free.

Just you wait, Will.

Chapter End Notes

It's getting spicy don't you think? I hope to convey the proper emotions for Will on this one.

Anyway hopefully we get to see Hannibal in the next chapter with the awaited meeting.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

> Hi! Sorry for the long wait, been busy with school stuff and such. But hope you enjoy this chapter! A sneek to the two most important characters

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The drive to Baltimore is filled with uncertainty. The feeling of being watched is still fresh from his mind and he might be losing his mind for saying this but this certainly borders outside the stalking spectrum.

Not to mention his incredibly vivid dream. Or a nightmare.

Just like how his nightmares were, it just comes and goes. His nightmares are more like memories of what the killers did to their victims but he cannot brush what they felt killing someone. Cannot brush the non-existent smell of copper around him. Cannot brush the feeling of the stickiness and wetness of liquid in his hands, in his arms, in his face. Cannot stop looking at the blood splatters on the floor and at the walls.

But as he said, they come and go. He can distance himself towards those thoughts. Create a barrier between them and himself.

Nightmares often lead him to a sweat soaked bed and a hot shower. Looking at cases and empathizing with the killer often took a toll with him. He can manage making a barrier between their mindset and his but with every look, with every use of his empathy, he brings a piece of their darkness to himself.

But recently the nightmares his consciousness projects are becoming more vivid and different. Personal.

What differentiated this to his previous nightmare was the scenery and the recurring appearance of the stag.

Will tried remembering what he dreamt in his nap. He remembered walking through the woods. The crunching of leaves. Smell of earthy soil as he traversed himself to the forest. The sudden sounds of hooves clicking to the soft ground. The strong scent of blood.

The satisfying slice of flesh.

A loud honk brought him back to the present. The green light illuminated brightly. The sun sets a bit later than usual hence there is a tint of orange on the surroundings. Not wanting to bother the driver before him, he drove.

Looking in his rear mirror, he saw a gray sedan — assuming that's the driver who honked at him —, speeding his way through the road, overtaking him immediately. Rude.

Fortunately the one next to the rude driver seems patient in which they are much slower than him. Seeing there would be no more interruption from lousy riders, he returned his speed to his average.

Even after the nap, he still cannot remove the unnerving feeling that he's felt since traveling to Wolftrap. Will sighed, hands gripped tightly to the steering wheel. He wanted to turn this wheel back and go straight to his dogs,or even to the stream to relieve some of the tension inside his head. Appointment be damned.

Still, he drove to the roads of Baltimore. As much as he despises sitting with a person who will poke his brain, he can admit that he is curious about the doctor. Based on the call card Alana gave him, the handwritten name speaks of finesse and aristocracy, Controlled. A person who knows what he’s doing and has perfected the control of making art by his own hands. A man with refined taste, ranging from paintings to literature.

But as the saying goes, don't judge the book by its cover, or better yet, don't judge a doctor with their handwriting. He would let his verdict decide once he meets this doctor.

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The sound of pen scratching fills the dark yet pleasant room. Thirty minutes has passed since his last patient has left his office but rather than preparing for his departure after finishing writing his observation for his patients, Doctor Hannibal Lecter is currently sitting nearby his desk, sketching at what his imagination offers him, a new plan for a tableau, to distract himself to his current thoughts.

A call, or rather a request, from Alana this early afternoon has Hannibal thinking for the rest of his free time. A request for a single session for a friend, a man, a special agent, who recently had a dangerous encounter with a killer and managed to survive and avoided the touch of death, albeit with the mental trauma that the confrontation offers. *He did kill the Shrike after all,* Hannibal muses. *Will Graham* as Alana told him his name.

Before the call had been made, he already knew the man — courtesy of Tattle crime — and his deadly encounter with the Minnesota Shrike, *Garret Jacob Hobbs* . Based on the articles made that tackle the agent, Graham is a professor at Quantico teaching criminal psychology. An interesting development since how come a professor managed to be a temporary agent for the case. What is so special at Will Graham to be included in this investigation?

And the answer lies in another article. The man has an uncommon way of discovering serial killers based on studying their psychology. Other than his sharp eyes for looking at evidence and the perception for observation, Graham can fully empathize with the killers because of his empathy disorder.

Hannibal relishes the thought. A man that has the ability to enter the darkest of minds. A man that could see the thoughts of others. A man who could fully understand the motivations of the killers he catches

A man who could fully understand him.
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Companionship is an idea that he knew he cannot obtain. And Hannibal is perfectly fine without some form of companion. He is perfectly fine knowing no one understands the grotesque art he makes. No one to learn about the special meat that he offers to his dinner parties. No one can understand the reason for his actions.

He is perfectly fine…alone.

And yet seeing the candid picture of the man, brown curls and all-seeing ocean eyes, he is filled not only with want but a desire to see Will Graham's potential bloom.

He looks at his eyes, it is electrifying and breathtaking. But other than that it hides something. It is well hidden that it is not noticeable to anyone but him. To the surface level, the photo looked to be just a tired man that has an irritating expression but Hannibal knows better.

He also has the same gleam in his eyes.

Will has the look of a predator but has the chains wrapped and locked. It is the look of a person gripping the leash tightly, scared of releasing his control over his own beast, his own darkness. He knows that Will killed the Shrike after Hobbs killed his wife and daughter. 9 shots is an overkill just for a single person after all. Why wouldn't he shoot Hobbs in a single shot? Unless…

Unless he lose hold of the leash.

Hannibal licks his lips. Anticipation can be felt in the air. How he wondered how Will felt emptying the gun's clip. How he imagined being by this creature's side as he pulled the trigger and made him realize that the monster is not meant to be caged, that it's meant to hunt. How breathtaking it is to see the beauty of this creature as he unleashes the darkness that lurks beneath. He would help him bring and accept his becoming just as he is meant to be.

And what a satisfying thought that was , Hannibal pondered.

He looked at his watch to see that two minutes remained until he met the man of the hour. Gathering the sketches and putting it in his locked drawer he begins to mentally prepare himself, professionalism shows at his person suit as he walks towards the door.

The watch hits 7:30 pm and he opens the entrance revealing three men. The first two men he saw are both cladded in cloak hiding their faces and features, and the other is not like the first two, no, the man wears hideous plaid with a tactical jacket on it. But the most defining feature of the third man was his hair. Brown curls.

Without hesitation he tried evading an incoming attack from the hooded man. The man swung a right cross unto his left arm and immediately leaned as he punched a left hook into Hannibal's torso. *Great build. Estimated to be in his late 20s or early 30s. Possible boxer or a trainer based on his movements and speed.*

With the continuous flurry of punches directed at him by the cloaked man not letting any opening for him to attack, he almost missed the other man's punch towards his shoulder. What he did miss was the hidden syringe in the man's palm.

The liquid that has been forced in him has an immediate effect on him. He tried gripping at the other man's arm, pulling him and whispered, "Who are you?".

The last thing Hannibal remembered before consciousness left him was the curious gaze of the man and a small "Bring him too."

Chapter End Notes

I know it's a bit short. I've been contemplating on putting their meeting here but it'll take some time. Sorry for leaving y'all hanging there but I assure you the next chapter would be the first meeting.

Any thoughts or reaction? Feel free to comment and kudos are well appreciated!

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

The First Night and Will's perspective from the previous chapter

Chapter Notes

TW: Implication of abuse and mild description of corpses

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will woke up with a jolt in his head, the cold cement touching his face, and a man in a suit lying alongside him.

He clutched his head tightly, feeling a bit dizzy. He looked around and saw that he is still currently laying on the floor. He tried searching for his phone to no avail. His keys, wallet, and aspirin, which earned a groan from him, are also missing, but his watch remained. A bit generous of them. Looking at the time it says 9:45 in the evening, not a lot of time passed from his appointment time. With the checking finished, he abruptly sat and thought of the events that had transpired.

He got a bit early to the Doctor Lecter's office, 12 minutes early for his appointment. Better be on time rather than late, it's rude after all. He then sat in the waiting room observing the simplicity of the room. The room is filled with various knowledge and information. Stack of books layered in one of the shelves for a quick reading, soft cushions and a sofa to ease patient's mind. The same can't be said to the frames pinned in the walls.

Will stood up to observe the paintings more but one that stood out the most was an oil painting of a raft filled with atrophy. The scene depicts multiple people reaching out to the sky for hopes of rescue, some are clutching at each other's despair, others lay bare at the raft, bodies unmoving. He moved closer to observe every detail there is at the painting. The painting shows the aftermath of a crash, a wreck. A group surviving at the middle of the sea with nothing but their tattered clothes and themselves. Looking at the desperation in their eyes shows they would do anything to survive. *Anything* .

As he wondered what kind of psychiatrist puts the concept of cannibalism onto their waiting room, the entrance opened revealing two cloaked men. Will looked at his watch revealing that he still got 2 minutes left until his appointment time. He knows he is the last appointment of the day, another patient in another hour would be overkill even for a self-employed person. Much more for 2 more patients.

Still standing in front of the painting, he spared them a look, observing them closely. The first man that entered is a muscular one, walking with confidence as he spared the waiting room a look. The second one is much leaner but also well built. He fixed his cloak a bit and immediately looked at Will.

Will, not immediately breaking eye contact, *sees* . He saw the intent in his eyes, showing people, no, he sees them as sacrifices. Sacrifices for the one who gave him purpose. The one who he has yet to meet but soon after the ritual finished, he would gladly offer himself up to the being…

Will mentally shook his head, removing the man's thought from himself. Back at the present, he knows what these men intended to do. Slowly, he took a step backwards, away from these cloaked men. His thoughts run a kilometer a second now thinking of options. He thought of knocking on the door to the Doctor's office but immediately stopped the thought. He doesn't want anyone getting hurt by these two. He tried glancing in his peripheral vision, looking for a way out.

The lean man looked at the muscular one and commanded, "Get him."

Will immediately tried avoiding a body slam towards the wall but as he struggled to escape from the grasp he felt a sharp sensation in his neck. Suddenly his struggles slowed, any fight from him left his body. The man then softly dropped him and all was black.

He rubbed the part that the sedative touched a bit harshly, irritated on the predicament he's in and the fact that he was kidnapped. He instinctively knew that there was something wrong with the way he felt on Wolf Trap but he did not expect that it would result in an actual kidnapping. What's much worse was he getting kidnapped just to be sacrificed to god-knows-what from this cult-like group.

Looking at the other man he noticed how polished he is. Clearly the man doesn't belong to this kind of place, and by this kind he means being in a tiny cell that looks closely to a dungeon rather than a basement. Looking at the man's suit, a cross-patterned three-piece suit, Will can only describe them as someone with money and wealth. Clean. Elite. Elegant. But personally, the man looks like a peacock with those combinations.

Not that he blamed the man. He wears plaid and partners it with a tie he owns from his father and a coat. It's simple and an effective way to avoid any kind of confrontation with others.

Eyes darting from the patterned clothes onto the man's face, he looks like a statue made by a renaissance artist. The man has a sharp jawline, and he knew that the man styles his hair with utmost care and precision, even with its hair a bit jostled. A hint of hair gel can be seen as a dim light reflects in the cell, touching the man's hazel hair. Even in the low light he knew this man is handsome, and from what he sees with the clothes and face, he can imagine the man can be an eye candy to events.

But hidden with all those layers and looks, he knows the man is hiding something. There's an instinctive feeling in his gut telling him that this stranger, an unconscious, kidnapped – if he did get kidnapped – person, is *dangerous.* He has every reason to be suspicious of this man, but with not enough information about the man and his captors it is too soon to arrive at conclusions quickly.

A soft groan coming from the man alerted Will, but he did not move from his spot. Silently, he sees the man slowly lifting himself into a sitting position and takes his surroundings, looking first at himself, then outside the cell, then he sees Will who quickly averted his eyes from the man, avoiding looking at the man's eyes. The man remains staring at him. From the looks of the man, he seems to be observing him.

And for the first time in his time in this cell, a question is asked, but not the one he expects. "Not fond of eye contact, are you?" a hint of amusement can be heard on the smooth voice.

Out of all questions the man could possibly ask, he asks about eye contact? Straight to the point but not a question of concern especially when one is stuck in a jail cell. Will internally sighs but does not answer the man.

The silence is deafening with the question still lying in the air, spreading unto the small cell. With what seems to be a minute passes and he answers, “Eyes are distracting. You see too much. You don’t see enough,” with no reply from the man he elaborated. “It’s hard to focus on looking when all you think was ‘oh those white are really white’ or ‘they must have hepatitis’ or ‘is that a burst vein?’” Now looking at the man he sees a small smile at the corner of the man’s lips. “So yeah I try to avoid eyes whenever possible.”

The man, still staring at him, nodded in understanding. Seeing the action as the end of conversation, Will looks at the horizontal bars trapping them when suddenly the man speaks. “I imagine what you see and learn throughout your life are absorbed into you, ingrained in your mind. Your knowledge in the present is known consciously, moreover into your unconsciousness, and yet you shock yourself to the associations you made. Forts not high enough to protect the things you love.”

And those words struck Will, knowing what the man says are not only accurate but also describes him better, *better than himself*. Not wanting to give the man the satisfaction of knowing if he’s correct, he glares at the man. The man has a neutral expression on his face but he knows the man’s left part of his lip has a slight upward curve. Thinking of how the man explains his reasoning, the man seems to be confident in speaking and knowledgeable in human behavior. A scholar perhaps? But no it doesn’t fit the bill. Possibly a doctor, someone who studied a person’s mind. A neurologist…

Or a psychiatrist.

He looks at the man with a renewed opinion. Connecting the dots, his eyes darted from the man's face towards its nose bridge, imitating eye contact. One psychiatrist entered his mind that could possibly be kidnapped alongside him.

“I don’t think we are in an appropriate place right now for a session, Doctor Lecter,” or any sessions at all for that matter.

“And I don’t think we won’t be here for a short while, Will. And please call me Hannibal.” Doctor Lecter replied, maintaining the look for a short while.

Will scoffed, “I still don’t think now is a time for psychoanalyzing me Doctor,” not mentioning the man’s name out of spite, and for psychoanalyzing him off the bat. Ending the

conversation, he looked around the cell, finding any hint of the time from the outside to no avail. Just cement and a toilet. Looking outside the cell he noticed other cells. One with a single person sleeping in it while he can't determine if there are others on the other row of cells. The place seems to be a large basement or a single-story building with how large it is, but not large enough to see that there are approximately 5 or 6 cells in here, including the one he and the doctor is in. Thinking of another way to escape he clutched his forehead, another spike of headache. He really wished that they didn't take his bottle of aspirin.

"You should take a rest for a while. I don't think those men have any intention of interrupting our evening especially this late." Doctor Lecter said, noticing now that the man sounded concerned.

"It's fine, really. This is just a minor headache, get 'em all the time," Will closed his eyes, trying to ease his head.

"I insist. You seem to need a considerate amount of sleep." The doctor insists in a calm voice. "You may not be my patient, but I still hold an obligation in the matters of health." The voice is beginning to lower but still holds a commanding tone in it. "I would alert you when someone does come here."

With a final look to the doctor, he nodded. "Sleep does not come easily with me but I'll try." With a slight movement to lie and relax his body he tried to rest. "Thank you, Doctor Lecter."

"You're welcome, and again just Hannibal when we're not in a professional setting."

A soft chuckle emits from Will, "Okay Hannibal." The reply seems sluggish with how tired he is. Like something's wanting him to sleep.

And the void took him with open arms. With a pair of maroon eyes looking at him with interest.

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His eyes opened in dark space. Blackness enveloped the ground, the field, the sky, everywhere he looked was filled with nothingness. A void.

In the void exists peace. The silence is deafening but there are no chatters, no gossip, no laughter. Looking around seeing nothing and no one. With the confirmation his hands reach his forearm, grasping and feeling the coldness of his skin and the sting from a slow-healing bruise. His hands felt the cold, the chill in his skin, the roughness of it. There's no sensation of knuckles hitting his skin, palms slapping his face, hands pulling his curls.

There's nothing.

A purple light shines in the middle of the void. An exit or an entrance? He doesn't know. He wanted to stay in this void, no one to tell him, no one to hurt him. No one but himself exists. But every place always has an exit, doesn't it? Still, he wanted to remain here. Remain for an indefinite time, even for him to be alone for the time period.

Be not afraid, my child. Let me guide you.

The voice came from the light but he could hear it clearly, softly, like a whisper that wanted him to come into the light. He thought about not listening to the voice. What if the voice is the same as the others? What if the voice is a trap? What if the voice hurts him just like them?

I'm not like the others my child. I would never wish to hurt you. You're precious to this world.

Precious?

Yes. Do not believe what they say, you're an important being my child.

As the voice speaks, the child slowly moves forward towards the bright purple light. Chocolate curls bounces in each step, sea-colored eyes stare with bewilderment at the light.

Until his arms reach towards the warm light encasing his small frame. He closed his eyes, avoiding the blinding shine of purple towards the void.

And suddenly he felt softness on his feet. Cold air slapped his skin, soft crunches of small paws can be heard nearby. He inhaled deeply, wildflowers, wood, and a rich earthy scent around him. Then he opened his eyes. Dark tree trunks, so high like reaching for the moon. Shadows loomed around the trees into small bushes, making the surroundings so dark, just like the void. Looking up he saw thin clouds blocking the moon's path of shining its surroundings. Slowly the clouds pass, revealing a full moon in its glory. Small blue eyes shined, mesmerized as he stared at the beauty of it.

A soft whine is heard at the child's side, revealing to be a stag. A stag, almost as dark as the shadows, loomed around the forest, with light that seemed to be reflecting its fur, like feathers of a raven. The stag nudged his arm then it took a step forward. Another step. And another. He followed.

He followed the Ravenstag's footsteps, following its pace. As he walked, he noticed different species of woodland creatures, the Ravenstag notices them too.

What is that, child?

Staring at the small creature. A rabbit, he sees it waiting peacefully.near the bushes. The creature seems to be looking for food because of its intense stare to the bushes.

He looked at the Ravenstag and replied, "A rabbit."

What do you see?

The child looked from the blackness of the stag's eyes towards the rabbit. He observed it closely. Looking. Seeing. He took a big inhale. He closed his eyes.

"I hopped from tree to tree, shrubs to shrubs, bushes to bushes, and yet they don't fill me. This won't quell my hunger. Need to search for more" The child's voice is as soft as clouds. Soft and low.

The being looks at the child whose head seems to be staring at the fluffy rabbit. Deep black orbs stared at the child, observing him, seeing him. The child's eyes, after a moment, opened.

"Searches for food. Something to eat. It's hungry,"

The child looks at the stag. "It wanted more. He seems…insatiable." he whispered where only the stag could hear him.

It seems to be, does it? *The stag muses. It then continued their walk.*

He nodded, moving forward to follow the mammal.

They walked and walked. There seems to be no direction on their journey, no destination. Their walk seems to take minutes or hours, but there are no aches. His feet are filled with soil, but he doesn't mind. He doesn't feel hunger either.

But there's something writhing inside him. He can feel it as he feels his skin.

The creature halted then put its noose towards the sky, searching, sensing. Then its head turned to the right. He follows what the stag is looking at. Then he saw a movement in the dark, a tail swishing with lupine eyes, a wolf,.

But that's not what captivated him. The wolf is standing, eyes staring at something below him, a shine of liquid. Then the scent hits him.

Blood.

He walks towards the wolf, slowly to not fright the mammal. As he gets near it, he glimpses what's at the ground, a carcass. He sees that the wolf is staring at him waiting patiently,

silently observing the boy. Then he got closer and closer and saw the thing.

A corpse.

Human corpse.

One that has its neck chewed out. Its clothing ragged, cloaked in blood. Its arms are filled with deep bite marks and slashes, spreading the man's skin towards the forest ground, seeming to defend itself from the lupine's attack. With the clothing destroyed he could see the scratches made into it's chest. Deep claw marks have splayed its chest open, revealing various bites from the organs. He sees red. The ground, the corpse, the wolf's claws, its noose.

The wolf managed to kill a human being. And eat it.

He stared at the wolf with wide eyes. Then he sees.

The wolf was being followed by this man for some time. The wolf tried to escape the man's eyesight, escaping from being a target. But it is not as easy as it was planned. The man then pulls his shotgun and tries aiming at the wolf. A show was fired and fortunately the wolf ran. The wolf is much slower than the man who attacked it with its knife, ready to slice and kill for the season. But the wolf gained the upper hand, biting at the man's uncovered skin. The wolf tackled the man after the bite and scratched him, the wolf being on offensive. Then he sees an opening. All it took was a big bite and the man was down. Down for good.

His breathing came slow yet rapid as he processed what he saw. But he didn't step back. Didn't cower in fear.

It's never fear.

The writhing in his skin that he felt moments ago has increased its intensity. Like it wanted to get out. He looked back to glimpse the stag approaching him. His eyes pleaded for answers to

what's beneath his skin.

The stag sees the child's questioning look.

What does it see?

What does it want?

The boy stares at the cryptic question the mammal offered. He does not have a reason to conclude the answers.

But he knew. He knew what it saw. Know what it wants. What he wants.

What do you want?

He stares at the splayed corpse in front of him. His heart beats like thunder, loud and quick. His breathing becomes irregular. His eyes dilated, it overshadowed the blue color in it.

He wanted to feel it. Wanted to touch it. Wanted to feel its warmth beneath his fingers.

He wanted to be the one who ended it.

The boy's eyes glowed, from its bright blue into a purplish hue. His eyes, still diluted from the thought, looked at the Ravenstag. It reveals a form where its hooves are turned into claws, its teeth become razor sharp, its antlers elongated that it looks like branches of a tree. It's mesmerizing.

The boy steps forward.

Its claws touch the boy's curls affectionately. It's eyes staring at him, with the same soft glow as his current eye color.

You'll feel it soon enough, child.

I will help you get it out.

Wait a bit longer sweet Will,

For you are the chosen one.

Chapter End Notes

This is the longest chapter I have made so far and you wont believe how much I used google translate and Merriam-Webster this week. I keep forgetting the proper English terms for most of the description but please let me know if there's confusion between sentences or in the plot overall.

We also get a glimpse of Will's childhood on his dreamscape! Wonder how that goes... But next chapter we get to see a glimpse of the cult and therapy.

Anyway, feel free to leave comments, as criticism are welcome, and kudos!

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

The start of a conversation.

Chapter Notes

Using some lines from the series as I just can't resist using them.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The sound of metal clanking alerted Will from his rest. He looks at Hannibal and sees that the doctor also woke up from the noise.

Now wide awake, Will slip a look outside the cell to reveal an opened cell door. A man cloaked in black is on guard until a person is thrown inside. The cloaked one immediately snapped the cell shut and locked it, no words came from them and he went straight to what seems to be the exit. He heard footsteps, hard shoes stepping on wood planks with such weariness. Will can only assume that the man is going upward with the sound of stepping slowly decreasing from the constant.

Looking at the newer jailmate he notices the man, still laying at the ground seemingly unconscious. From what he can glimpse at the man in the low light, he can see the man wearing a plain blue collar shirt and classic black jeans to finish the plain look. The man seems to be largely built with how loud of the men dropped him. He seems to be injected by the same drug that got him. Did the doctor also get injected by that? Might question that later on.

He looked at the time and saw that he slept for 5 hours, as it was past 3 in the morning. That's the longest sleep he had for a while and he wouldn't be concerned if he's not sleeping on bare concrete. And especially if he is not imprisoned by delusional criminals.

Gathering the mental strength to be awake and at least move his body a little, he shifted to better look at the man who looked polished at the dim light, no wrinkles in his suit, not a strand of hair out of place — which is a surprise because how could a man looked like that even being thrown in an unpolished cell?

Doctor Lect—Hannibal. Right, it's Hannibal now. Hannibal seems to be not sleeping immediately after the commotion earlier. The doctor looks beyond the cell, seems to be waiting for another interruption but minutes passed and still no heavy footsteps can be heard,

no loud bang of a wooden door, and no loud clang of metal shifting. His shoulders relaxed, noticing just now how tense he is. Then he looked at Will.

"Are you feeling alright Will?" Hannibal asked with a voice laced with concern. Will doesn't really want to answer for the sake of a little more silence between them, and also to spare himself the trouble of socializing more. But that would be rude of him and the doctor has done nothing but polite at him, except the psychoanalyzing part.

The scent of stone, urine, and sweat mixed up can be smell as he inhaled for an answer, "Yes, thank you for your concern Docto—I mean Hannibal."

Hannibal stared at him, not believing the short answer. He sighs and elaborates. "Sleep is something that I haven't found comfort in for a long time. Especially when your consciousness is not spared by what you see in the job."

The doctor pondered at the answer, "Your job as a Professor or a consultant?"

"Both. I am a criminal psychology professor on Quantico. I teach my students based on closed cases to focus them on what they need to understand in order to find the correct suspect. And sometimes these cases tend to be gruesome. Not a sight that gives you a piece of mind."

And it is gruesome at some point. Different kinds of kills pertain to different motives. Different motives mean different suspects, different killers. Different mindset for him to see and for him to analyze. And the worst of all, for him to empathize in order to understand their reasons.

He felt their thoughts invade his mind full of blood and violence. Full of killing and adrenaline. Of murder and blood.

He understood why they did it. Understanding to the point where the barriers of his mind are receiving scratches from the darkest of minds he had entered. The forts he made are exceptionally high and bold, he wouldn’t let those thoughts linger in him for too long. The forts separating what are them and what are his.

Then the Shrike case happened. Then he shot the older Hobbs ten times in their kitchen. Then he failed to save the young Hobbs from the slash her father gave her. Then he looked at the corner, the smell of copper still vivid in his senses. Garett Jacob Hobbs body was filled with bullet holes with his skin turning pale. Then a single word was whispered loudly…

See.

And he did.

Looking before him he saw red. Eyes flicking at the object in front of him and at his hands. Patches of blood coated his small frame slowly began to oxidize, the thick metallic scent has been engrained on his young mind. He moved forward and directly looked at what was in

front of him. He kneels and his arms straightened, tiny hands reach the object and feel skin and warmth. Blood coated his hands and all he can feel is the sudden urge to feel it once more…

Deep breathed and releasing the sudden tension that covered his body by the sudden memory, Will faced the doctor looking directly at his maroon eyes and forced a smile, then moved his attention somewhere.

But nothing really comes easy when it comes from the doctor. “Our nightmares are often depicted as our minds conjuring fear from the waking world or from a memory buried so deep into our unconsciousness. Tell me Will, does the nightmare that haunts your mind appear even with your mind fully awake?”, Dr. Lecter inquired, eyes boring into Will with the intent of peeling the defenses of the brunette.

“I would rather not get psychoanalyzed about thoughts that ran around my head in a cell Doctor Lecter.” Will scoffed, slowly getting irritated by another unwarranted psychoanalysis.

That does not deter the doctor from pressing, “Need may I remind you that this is your time, whether we are in our office or an unsanitary room.” Another jab with eyes filled with what seems to be mirth and amusement.

“Do I also need to remind you that we got kidnapped by some cultist from god knows where?”

“Does not change the fact that we do not achieve what seems to be the reason we’re meeting. And by unfortunate circumstances, we have met here.” Hannibal’s palm opened wide, pointing through their room showing his point.

Will shook his head slightly downward, point taken seriously. Scratching his beard lightly he silently thought of a possible solution. “What do you propose to do then Doctor?”

For the first time in a more lucid state he saw Hannibal straighten his back and saw the upward tick of his lips.

“A conversation.”

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"How does that make you feel?"

"How does that make you feel?"

And what a conversation it is. Hannibal has never felt more challenged in his life for prying into the mind of Will Graham.
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From what he gathered about the agent he has an inkling that the man takes all emotions around him like a sponge that thirst for its special liquid. He wanted to learn what makes the man tick. He wanted to peel his brain poke at the amalgamation this beautiful mind creates.

The line of their conversation started with the closed case, the case in which is the reason they are meeting in the first place. Hannibal knew that peeking at the man's mind would be a difficult notion.

From all his psychiatric experience, he has yet to see someone that manages to go toe-to-toe on his conversations. But this man is just so full of surprises. Surprises he is ready to indulge.

He thought back to their conversation about Will's confrontation with the Minnesota Shrike. The consequences of entering a family of three and leaving with nothing but the cold bodies of a serial killer and two innocent people.

"I imagine that it would cause me a huge amount of grief knowing that a young life has been lost in front of me." Hannibal replied, honesty lacing his words with what can be heard as sincere.

Will looked at him for a moment then nodded. "Me too." Will answered, dismissing any notions for a continuation.

"Have you ever thought about the possibility of how your killer managed to hunt these women?" Prying with bits and pieces of information from the agent's perspective. He has thought about how the Shrike killed his victims after all. Hobbs is a hunter, he knows how to blend, how to stalk, how he determines what is prey and what isn't. How to lure his prey.

And what better way than to prey on young women than to use your very own lure that he himself created?

Hannibal stared at the man, gears seeming to slot themselves and connecting all the dots of information from the case.

Eyes wide Will spoke, "Garret Jacob Hobbs hunted alone. Abigail Hobbs is innocent." But his very eyes say otherwise.

“I have no doubt that she is. She is the last victim of the shrike after all.” Hannibal concluding the fact said. But he pressed, "But the notion of her being an apprentice was entirely possible."

He saw Will pressing his hands into his eyes, palms pressing deeper into his sockets and moving its fingers straight to his forehead. A deep inhale and a large sigh comes, the exhale seems to relieve the agent from the tension he didn't notice that builds in his shoulders, a large weight that lessens just from a theory or a possibility.

A chuckle filled with contempt is released from Will, "Possible. But I don't rule this theory as much," He straightened up, forming a backing for his second sentence. "No use on blaming someone that is supposedly six feet underground."

“No there won’t be. After all, there won’t be a Shrike to torment the others now that the Shrike has been hunted down.”

The statement seems to silence Will. Hannibal has been sparing him a glance knowing the man won’t initiate eye contact after the previous ambush. Now with the sudden silence that envelops the conversation, he looked at Will and notice an expression with what seems to be a contemplation. His eyes foggy, unfocused, with irises that seem to darken in a dim environment. He noticed the small shiver that ran on Will's body, a shake that could be seen based on the cold. But the scent of fear says otherwise.

Seeing how Will is not entirely in the room right now, he thought of this as an opportunity. Thinking about the proper words to convey, Hannibal proceeds, "Ending a person's life knowing what they've done can be seen as a righteous deed."

The glossy look that Will shows in his eyes seems to darken a bit more. With an unsteady voice he replied, "That does not mean killing him is right." Will closed his eyes faintly, eyelids pressed deeply with what seems to be a control slipping with previous memory emerges.

Hannibal hummed. "But there is an inevitability where a man so bad that killing him felt so good."

Will, on the other end of the small cell leaning the wall, shaking slows gradually. Hands clenched tightly on the soles of his jacket. His voice so soft that only beyond their cell can hear his voice, "Killing Hobbs felt just."

The slow breathing that the curly haired man is hiding does not escape to Hannibal's observations. Every breath is deep, like a silent hyperventilation. And that behavior still goes until now with their conversation.

Hannibal leaned towards Will. He slowly moved closer by moving his body on the floor, not changing his position as they talked.

"It wasn't the act of killing Hobbs that got you down was it?" He leaned a little closer, with his next sentence seems to be a whisper, a secret between the two. "Did you feel so bad that killing him felt so good, Will?"

At that moment Will' eyes opened. At close proximity Hannibal saw a tinge of purple in one of his eyes, with pupils blown wide, mouths agape.

Will whispered back.

"I liked killing Hobbs."

"Killing must felt good to God too, he does it all the time. Are we not created in his image after all?"

"I don't think God exists beneath these walls. The devil reigns in the underground waiting for its bext execution after all." Will's eyes remain the lilac color, slowly encompassing the other

iris.

"The devil is one of God's creation, they are the original angels of the sky until the great fall, fallen by their own hands." He explained, hinting the situation they are in. "The devil lingers with the knowledge from the above with nowhere to place themselves other than where they are standing. No doubt he become his own god in the below, being the very being that has fallen him."

Looking at the man in front of him, he stared at his changed eyes and saw the buried darkness that is caged beneath the layers of what Will believes to be his real self. He saw chains and black slick but what astonished him was how beautiful this creature could become underneath those layers.

He saw the expression Will is showing and it is an understanding of what he felt, the euphoria of seeing someone understood, someone sees. It makes his insides flutter. With the potential within his grasp, he solidifies his own plan.

Moving his arm to Will's shoulder, another whisper is done. "He felt powerful. Not even the will of God could stop him."

'And I would let you feel the power again dear Will, whether you have fallen or not.'

As he speaks internally he sees how Will's eyes slowly shuttered close, unconsciousness taking him. Hannibal wonders whether those dreams will be filled with flesh and blood.

Chapter End Notes

Stares at the calendar And would you look at the date? I'm so late on posting and i'm so sorry for that. Turns out, writing on the spot with a self-deadline of a week is not a great idea and especially when you're juggling your research paper and two assignments.

Although I'm not gonna lie, writer's block is also a factor for this late posting but I ain't gonna quit on this fic. This chapter is supposed to be a much longer one with the plot involves the cult but I do hope you enjoy this one.

Anyways, this fic will have a sporadic updates for the meantime until I get my shit together. I did make an outline for this fic's plot so a little piecing it all together is all I need.

As always, if you ever notice a mistake or errors, please comment down below. Feedbacks and kudos are well appreciated!

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

CW: Implied drowning but not explicitly described

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As he opened his eyes, what he saw was not the white gaze of the moon, not the rustle of the leaves, nor the dark soil in the ground.

No. The first thing his ocean colored eyes sees is the familiar darkness of nothingness. He sees nothing, hear nothing, felt nothing.

But that's not entirely true. Isn't it?

He sees the darkness inside the void, everything is dipped in inky black. The darkness is darker than the night in the deepest woods. He somehow knew that even the light from outside, if there is any light or an outside, would cower and second guess themselves to the enveloping shadow inside the void.

He hears the ringing in his ear, the silence is everlasting, enveloping, infinite. Like being stuck into the anechoic chamber. Every breath he took, every minuscule step he moved, every single twitch of his hand reverberated in every cell of his body. A nonexistent decibel that seems to flow and echo through the metaphorical walls bounce throughout the void making the sound of blood circulation louder in his ears. The sounds hisses softly in his head that makes him want to whimper, to reach out, to say something, and yet there's nothing.

He felt like liquid. A state of matter that does not have any definite shape nor definite form. A fluid being that took shape without the use of a solid form, a container of some sorts. His soles, his fingers, his hair flows through the windless void, seemingly content on being an unbothered state of liquid flesh. But with a clench of a fist, a small "crack" has emitted to one of his fingers. Evidence of a solid state.

Getting back from his reverie he jerked his hand, feeling back the sense of control for being solid. He looked down and realized he wear pants and tactical boots, he then tried wiggling them for movement.

A small splash and the feeling of wetness below momentarily shocked him but he recovered to uncover another clue. This place is not just a void it seems as he created a ripple of water, kicking the small amount of liquid below.

Even without a source of light he can see that the liquid is moving in a direction, a current exists in this widelong dark environment. He looked to what seemed to be the current's direction and saw absolute blackness. Not a hint of light, not even a hint of life towards nowhere.

His head aches momentarily. Will's mind spins, gathering all observations he collected in the past minutes he is inside this darkness. The moment he opened his eyes he remembered the light of the moon, leaves, dirt, all the things that can be seen at night in the woods. Why does he remember those?

In his peripheral vision he saw two violet orbs out of nowhere. Two orbs that move the same as the other and yet not getting close to the other sphere. Then a clicking sound can be heard from the orbs.

A set of clacks are heard and the orbs that look like stars from afar seems to brighten. Another set and orbs grew wider in a microscopic length but he still managed to notice. Will's eyes squinted, everything is nothing but those orbs do not form without something.

And then those orbs are not just simple spheres now, those are eyes. Purple glowing eyes with the purpose of moving towards him. But why?

Questions that he did not realize formed in the back of his mind as Will stared at those unnatural eyes. What is that thing? Why are those eyes colored? Where am I really?

Why am I here?

But you do know why you are here.

The voice makes Will's body flinch hard. The first sound he ever heard after opening his eyes and yet those sounds are not what he expected. Nor are those statements directed at his thoughts, his mind.

Because he did. He knew.

But there will always be denial there.

"I…do not really know why am I here. Inside this….Abyss." And those words coming from his mouth reeks of ash. Dryness and parched, like he came from a desert, walking for days without any sustenance for his poor throat. But that's not the reason for its dryness.

I appreciate your courtesy, but is that really your answer?

And he felt cold. A shiver shook from him, the sudden drop of temperature made it clear that was the consequences of his words. But clearly the voice is holding back as the temperature goes back to the negative into the normal temp of nothing.

The being, because Will's sure it's a being, not a man nor a human, nearly makes him tremble with those words that reverberate into his whole being. It slowly moves forward towards him and he can see a blurred silhouette. He can vaguely see a form but it is clear that the body is also as dark as the place he's standing right now. There seems to be a shining part below the eyes but those might be the trick of his eyes.

Do you still deny the truth?

The voice startled him the moment it talks to him, the voice still rings into his ear. It sounded like the distorted noises that radio emits in a low frequency. But in his mind, the voice rings

loud —not like a shout but it echoes through his mind, until now—, clear, as clear as filtered air, and deep. The deepness is similar to how deep male voices are, the lowest decibels a man can hear. But most of all, the voice radiates power. Power unlike anything he ever heard before. (If there can be a fight between dominance of voices, Jack Crawford may lose his pedestal.)

Below him, he noticed the shine of the liquid. It's dark but it isn't transparent as he thought it would be. The water glimmers even without a hint of light nearby. He did a tap using the sole of his shoe and the water ripples. It shines a deep red.

His heart beat a second faster.

Fear still lacing your heart?

His eyes shutted instinctively, like an automatic response to danger. With his eyes open wide to this abyss, all he could see was the vast darkness of nothingness, relying to his other senses to guide himself. But with his eyes closed tightly, it's not another emptiness that he saw.

Memory flows like a tidal wave through him. Various images pop up as seconds come by. Like a vivid film, a continuous collection that rotates and rotates to show his personal nightmare. Although his mind conjures a specific film, one could tell this might be his mind's favorite from his own personal horror collection.

(The door kicked open. Traditional FBI speech procedure rang inside. An attempt to calm down the man. Blood pooling into the kitchen floor. Bullet shells dropping at the ground. Multiple shots piercing the poor man dead. A girl on the floor with a deep slash in her neck. A whisper. A realization.)

His heart beat a second more faster.

He does not want to name this feeling, the something that runs in his veins. His heart pumps full of it, feeling the ichor that spreads into his whole being, his whole soul, like an enveloping warmness that feels just right. Like it belongs right here with him.

A nagging feeling in his brain tells him that there's something wrong. A puzzle that has been jumbled for a long time, begging to be completed, longing to be whole. But there will always be a missing piece.

There is a missing piece.

Do you still reject your very soul's wants?

The liquid rises that reaches to his thigh. It moves upwards quickly, the tinted water enveloping now from his thigh towards his stomach into his chest. Panic settles in his bones, urging him to move, to find a way out.

And as he opens his eyes all he can see is the embodiment of darkness itself in the form of a being with wooden, ivory-like antlers so wide and purple-tinted eyes that shines so bright, that stares at him.

A clawed hand slowly reaches him. He knows he need to get away from the being, to escape the predicament he's in.

But he can't.

Physically, Will can't move at his position. His instincts on the other hand, urges him to stay, to trust the being in front of him.

A soft pat of a claw towards his cheek moved him away from his thoughts. But the water has enveloped him completely.

He can't breathe. He can't think rationally. He can't move.

Yet his heart is calm as the water that is around him. It beats calmly, slowly, different from the beat that rages in his chest just minutes ago.

Liquid entered his lungs making him unable to breathe. It flows and flows and flows through his skin and above his head. Tainted water encased him, surrounding him like a cocoon.

Will felt like being carried as his legs gave their stance, his body felt numb by the water that is all around him. He floated.

There's no panic, no alarm, no feeling of urgency as he's being trapped against his will.

Everything felt calm. He's at peace.

And yet he does not feel content. There is something that urges him to do, to fulfill, like a scratch that does not go away no matter what he did. No amount of action and toleration can endure the need *to do, the* want *that his mind persists.*

A soft sway of his hair is felt, pointy nails gently scratching his scalp. The being gently poked at what he felt to be two bumps in his head.

We both know you crave the missing piece, Will.

He tried clenching his fist, blood spills on his palm mixing to the encased water within him. Four puncture wounds emerged in his hands. Five sharp claws showed as he unclenched his hand.

He wanted to bury his claws on something solid. Something thick yet easy to cut with. Something rubbery.

The creature smirks.

With the brightest of light hides the darkest shadows. Acceptance is the truth behind what's hidden.

Will you accept it?

Will's eyes opened from its previous clenched eyelids. Bright violet orbs reveal from its hiding place.

Two pairs of eyes stared at each other, knowing each other's thoughts.

Soon, Will.

The creature smiles with joy painted to its inhuman face.

Will's lip curved into a smirk.

Soon…

~~~

Will.

Will?
~~~

"Will?"

A hand lay on his shoulders, moving him harsher than usual. The hand moved from his shoulders to his head, feeling the moisture beneath the skin.

Will opened his eyes to reveal Hannibal's face looking at him with polite concern. He saw the doctor's arm reached his head, surely feeling his forehead for a temperature check.

With a moment's consideration and a look of certainty, Hannibal removed his hand, backing a bit to give Will some space.

"I apologize for the sudden invasion of your personal space, but it seems you cannot be awakened with just a voice." Hannibal explained professionally.

Now more awake with the explanation, Will moved his body accommodating himself to the stone-cold floor, making himself more comfortable, or at the very least, satisfied by his position. "It's fine, nightmares tend to stick to me more than usual. And I'm sorry for the disturbance, can't really keep the things I see out of my head." He half chuckled, not minding the self-depreciative tone he unconsciously showed.

Will tried doing some quick deep-breaths, calming himself, rationalizing himself with his current situation.

"Do you remember it?"

"Hm?" He is pulled away from his calming routine from the sudden question.

"Our consciousness tend to create scenarios that are based on what we experienced. By these experiences, our consciousness tries to recollect these memories for us to experience such situations. The stress that we felt is the result of these cases."

Putting two and two together, he realized what the implication means. "I'm not traumatized if that's what you're saying."

A small twitch on the doctor's lips shows, then it's gone in a blink of an eye. "Of course," With a nod, the doctor continues. "I assume that is the case for you Will. But that does not mean these nightmares must always be with you for you to endure."

Ocean blue eyes stared at the doctor, analyzing the man with what he could possibly question from that statement. Will looked intently towards the doctor to find nothing but a dark colored veil. Once again, looking at the doctor is like looking at a blank mirror.

Thinking about the hidden proposition Hannibal implied, he thought about his recent nightmares. They really took a good amount of rest from Will, especially with him engaging on the field. While Will tends to stick to the traditional approach of not minding one's business and owning up one's problem, this might be the best, if not worst, time to broach this subject. Even with the unfortunate timing of being a victim of kidnapping. Even unfortunate that he’s telling it to a psychiatrist who he seems to be trusting.

With that in mind, Will took a deep-breathe, hands moving vigorously at his face. After a moment of contemplating and accepting what will happen next, He laid his eyes on the man then nodded at Hannibal.

With a silent tilt of acknowledgement, Hannibal proceeds, "Tell me Will, what do you see when you enter the sleeping world?"

Chapter End Notes

"Oh wow another dreamscape part in which we do not understand wtf is happening but still there's plot involved."

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Therapy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Tell me Will, what do you see when you enter the sleeping world?" Hannibal prods gently, as to not further shock the agent.

Will seems to be second-guessing his answer but eventually caved in.

"I— I don't get these nightmares that often," His hands now rubbing his face more intensely than before. "But lately, everything is just so vivid." Will said in the lowest tone. The shakiness on the agent's stuttering is more prominent now that Hannibal pointed out indirectly one of the man's main problem.

"The images our minds convey can often mean that it is showing what needs to be shown. In your case, your mind are like a reel of film, carefully chosen which to show."

"My mind wanted me to experience every horror I already encountered then. Great psychoanalysis there doctor." If Hannibal is not already acquainted with human behavior, he might say that Will's sarcastic remarks are just polite statements with the tone of his voice.

"But a film, even with the length and the contents it includes, can still be considered a treasure. Precious even. Something to be kept carefully." Hannibal spared a look on Will's eyes.

And their eyes met. Electric blue on dark maroon. With what seems to be minutes passed without a response from Will, Hannibal salvaged the conversation.

"What lies behind our eyes shows in our unconsciousness, giving life to what we need to see. Does your mind show the horrors of the cases you see or was it more than just a nightmare?"

Will's hands clasps the sleeves of his jacket tightly, feeling the anxiety that brews in their conversation.

"Recently… it does not feel like a dream anymore. I always end up in a forest, similar to the woods in Wolf Trap. Always at night and always at the very same spot of the forest.

"I remembered walking, and that's all I did, walked. I didn't know what direction i'm going just that I walked. Then every time, the stag appears.

"It, the stag, there is something that makes me follow it. Like a pull that won't stop tugging until I turn my attention to it. And everytime it always leads me into a clearing." Will's eyes glazed, his mind still engaged with the memories of the dream.

"Stags often appear in dreams. For some cultures, stags are the navigators, those who lead to their destinations, into the track they are meant to traverse. In the Celtic mythology, stags are a symbol of nobility and strength. A creature of power that wanders through its domain. Does your stag lead you to where you have touched strength? To experience its power?"

"How do you define power?"

Will looked at him expectedly.

Hannibal hummed. "Power can be a lot of things. It depends on the person who sees itself as higher than others. Some may say that power makes them feel better. Might I say that power is something that we hold closest to us."

Will's voice doesn't waver but the way he asks is just as electrifying as the question. "Does power make someone feel alive?"

"It does." Hannibal answered without a moment's hesitation. Power, in any form, makes a person feel light. Drunk from what they know they hold. Hannibal does feel the power he holds every time he hunts for a swine. Although killing does not make him feel emotional towards a kill, he enjoys the methodical accuracy of creating art in his chosen medium.

Seeing that Will does not reply from the look of his eyes, he follows his answer with a reply. "The dreams your mind conjures takes place in a forest. Vast, dark, mysterious. And with the stag always at your call as your guide. That is the place you see as safe, a place where you can be free to wander without the stress of work. Do you often hunt into the woods Will?"

Will shook his head, "I prefer fishing."

"A relaxing hobby. I admit I have not experienced the joy of fishing in my years. I imagine it is an enjoyable experience." Hannibal smiled sincerely.

A small yet bright chuckle comes from Will, making the agent more lively than just before. "I cannot imagine you wearing waders especially from a man who wears three-piece suits to his appointments." Another round of silent laugh and he breathes. "Fishing is something I grew up with. Comes from living near swamps and the motivation to not starve.

"There's this stream near my house. It is peaceful, to say the least. Just wading into the quiet of the current, hoping for a fish or two to bite the bait. I haven't gone there for a while now but it's one of the places I can consider to be my own personal haven.

"How 'bout you doctor? I assume you have any experience on hunting?" Hannibal knows a quid pro quo if he heard one. Will opening up is more than what he expected. Who is he to not respond with the same passion?

"You assumed correctly." He confirmed, albeit in a different context. "From where I grew up as a mere child is where I often hunt before. Our place is surrounded by woods, thick trees, and the ecosystem thrives. Not far away from us is the forest." He remembered walking

through the woods vividly. He likes observing nature, curiosity spiking from every animal he encountered.

"Hunting gives us the ability to balance wilderness. Too many predators leave small amounts of food. The same logic applies for preys." Hannibal concluded, looking at the man and seeing that he understood what he meant.

Will nodded, agreeing. "Nature left us humans a task on balancing their ecosystem." He ended with a mused expression as he repositioned his seat at the stone cold floor.

"Nature intended to balance the world. Wolves, lions, tigers, these beings hunted hares, deers, antelopes to balance their own kind of society. It is their nature's intention to balance. To weed out lesser prey.

"One can say that animal nature and human behavior are quite similar."

Will stared at Hannibal, blue eyes focused on the edge of his own, an illusion of eye contact, looking for a deception on the track they're going. "Human nature is different from what nature intended."

"Humans have hunted their own species for thousands of years before. To hunt to protect. To hunt to survive. How are we different to how these beings are portrayed?"

"How is that similar to the ones we hunted?" The tone would be heard as defensive but Hannibal knew the curiosity that lays on those words.

"Nature left us a job of balancing our own kind of nature. Lions hunt those who are a threat to their pride, eliminating the enemy in their own way. But the same species also hunts for the sake of enjoyment. The thrill of knowing they are the predator of their land. A creature hunting for another being.

"These killers you've taught, are the reasoning behind their killings based on twisted forms of pathology, are they not? It is logical to catch them before they strike another. Men hunting their own. Which begs the question, who hunts those who hunt themselves?"

"We catch those needed to be caught." Will says, looking away from Hannibal with another conflicting look. He doesn't miss the slight clench of the agent's fist on his arm.

"You did." Hannibal shifted a small, controlled movement, alerting Will on his change of position. He looked at Will who's eyes seemed to be looking far away, towards another unmoving cell.

A dry scoffed emerged from Will, voice void of any amusement. "Yeah, well I didn't catch him."

"I thought otherwise. You didn't physically catch him but you stopped his future victims. That righteousness you felt is as just as protecting yourself against a man with an intent to kill." Hannibal elaborated against Will's conflicting emotions.

The mental war on the profiler's eyes clearly shines as they make small eye contact. With a deeper look, he could see a glimpse of the beast that Will Graham hides. He could bury the beast within the deepest parts of himself. Chain it. Lock it. To be buried into the chasm, never to see the light of day.

But Hannibal knew better. With the proper coaxing, the beast would reveal itself. After all, the beast and the man are one and the same as blue eyes radiate a violent want.

"You see yourself as a protector, a noble man doing God's work of executing justice to men who deserve to be seeped of their humanity as they do not deserve the title of being human. God has made its decision to create us in his image. Our desire originates from Him after all. To experience desire is a promise that we fulfill.

"Was it considered a sin to fulfill our creator's wish? One could say that we are Him, after all, we are made after his own desires, image," Dark maroon eyes meet ocean blue. "wants."

Blue eyes are now mixed with a tint of purple on the sides as Will's eyes showed something that Hannibal knew all too clearly. A hunger that could only be sated with blood and death. But he knew the profiler would not give in. Not yet.

As Hannibal starts to continue to speak, a loud bang of a metallic gate enveloped the space. Afterwards, heavy footsteps can be heard within the walls of the pseudo-dungeon. Within his peripheral vision, he could glimpse a thin silhouette walking towards their cells.

With the conversation coming to a halt, Hannibal saw Will squinting outside his cells to seek who may be the one who interrupts their lovely talk. Hannibal, not moving from his original position, is content to let Will do the investigating.

Although he is curious on what could the man be here for. Another poor soul kidnapped against their will, ready to be placed and sacrificed in the near future. Or an offer of food and beverages given that they've been here at least a day. Probably two days at most.

Hannibal took a deep breath against his own dismay. Assaulting his sense of smell for the sake of knowing without seeing the cultist in his place. A smell of dry acrid, like a flatten chemical that has been stored for months in a compressed container. And what seems to smell like yeast, solid, with a hint of sourness and the scent is small but with his sense of smell he assumes it is a poor attempt at buying a fresh pieces of bread.

A hooded man entered his periphery walking sluggishly but with purpose. Hannibal's guess is correct as he saw the man bringing a bag of bread and bottled water to the cell in front of theirs, talking about the budget being a little low.

The said man then turned at their cell, handling the food offerings at them, eyes traveling around their cell and then looking at them intently.

The stare does not last a second long as the man brought the bag inside their cell. Hands reaching put with the plastic bag with a pair of bread and water bottles. "Uh… here's your food for the day, or for the week I guess." The man palming his face like his errand is the most tiring job he had experienced. "But with the speed we're going y'all be out in less than a

week!" His voice filled with a little more enthusiasm to help with his nerves. Not so much for the prisoners then.

A chatty pig. Hannibal hums remembering the boisterous personality of a certain patient. He automatically removed the thought before he even processed it. He does not want another reason to stress another unfortunate event.

"I suppose you do not mean to release us to the world?" Hannibal questioned the man in front of them. Conversing is one thing to get information after all.

The man looked confused at the question and made an "o" sound, comprehending. And then laughter filled the room. It's not filled with malice as he would expect but with humor like one has told them a joke.

"Haaa, sorry ‘bout that but you're absolutely correct there Mr. Three Suits. Y'all be out of the jail but I might say you might be out of this world too!" Another round of laughter, a little more hysterical than the first one. If Hannibal's not a prisoner right now he would ask for a call card from this person. Alas, now is not the perfect situation for it.

Composing himself once again, he questioned, "And why is that Mr?"

"Just Lea is fine. And well, we are kind of collecting these people y'know? Not so sure what kind because the higher ups have this list that we gotta get before the time comes which I think is this week? Not so sure ‘bout that."

So they are in a time limit then. Not a lot of time to escape. He looked at Will and saw that he also concluded the same thing.

"Why are you collecting people then Lea?" It's now Will who asked the question, noting the use of the man's name. A strategy of humanizing your kidnapper.

The man, Lea, looked from Hannibal to Will. He hummed before answering. "Look, you see I just got into this shit because they said they are into something about getting the chosen one and summoning a demon? And they can grant you wishes! Who wouldn't want that?"

"So what? You joined because of some nut job telling you they will summon some demon and they'll give you the riches with the snap of their hand? Just like that?" Hannibal can sense the frustration in Will's voice. But underneath it is something more.

"Of course not! The boss said that he has been promised that but if the demon does not meet the deal then they have some ways to make that shit obey us y'know?" Lea looked at them like he does not say the most outrageous thing to an FBI special agent and a psychiatrist.

"So the kidnappings, these are all for your grand sacrifice for this non-existent demon. And a form of pissing contest to the said demon." Will's eyes are now closed as he slowly takes a deep breath now that he connected the evidence Lea told them. Hannibal also noticed how tensed Will's shoulder is and how clenched his fist are.

A shout from the basement entrance calling for the man makes them almost jump from surprise. Almost.

"Yeah man, can't wait to get my hand on those riches." Lea turned from them, now walking towards the stairs until he paused. The room seems to lower its temperature a degree colder suddenly.

With a low voice that echoed to the cells the man added, "Can't wait to get my hands soaked in y'all blood too." And a hysterical laugh boomed for a few seconds before the laugh ceased.

Hannibal looked at Will, gauging his reaction with the man's revelation. To an untrained eye Will looked shocked, shaking slightly with his eyes sealed closed. But it's more than it meets the eye. Then a smell invaded his olfactory senses. A strong scent of copper. He looked down to see something dripping. And towards the source of the blood drip to see it coming from Will's hands clenched too tight.

Outside their cell, various whispers and begging can be heard throughout the room. Someone begging to be let out, some clanking the metal door hoping for it to loosen up. Others are waiting for their inevitable death while the other can be heard praying for hope and redemption. Praying still knowing nothing will happen.

After all, there's no hope to be found in a place where the devil reigns.

Chapter End Notes

I actually have to submit my thesis draft the next week, but instead of finishing interpreting the data for the results of methods and finishing the draft, i decide to proofread this and said fuck it and post it here. Enjoy the result of cramming and multiple brain rots I encounter for the past 5 months.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Can't wait to get my hands soaked in y'all blood too."

A complete 180 of the man's personality that for some reason this riles Will's mind. The whole conversation is absurd, insane even. And he's been studying insane, hell he's teaching insane to his students.

Cult started with a belief, a promise of creating an entirely new belief for people to rely with. There are a lot of different kinds of cults. Some are made as a safe haven with a belief that they will be safe and saved as long as they follow the leader's rules. Others involved religion, a belief that they are the chosen one, the only one not to be burned by the fiery pits of hell and to receive the grace of the Lord the more they preached and to save others.

The most dangerous one, however, are the cults that involve sacrifices for their god that require the death of a being. Or as the worshipers believed.

This sacrificial cult is definitely in for the blood. Not all of the cultist here joined for the sake of a bloodbath as some had a different purpose as it seems. But the assumption that most of these 'cultists' are here for the sake of the bloodfest is one more reason they should be stopped as soon as possible. It is alarming how dangerous the members of this cult are. Just like the person whose words exuded terror to their captives.

Those words make the prisoners more active, more alarmed, scared, terrified. Afraid of knowing why they are finally in a small cell. Of knowing that death awaits them and they are at the hands of a possible psychopath.

But not him, no. A different emotion spreads throughout him.

What the man said enraged him. He felt hot all of a sudden but the feeling that the man will fulfill his wish infuriates him. That man—no, that pathetic waste of a human being does not

have the right to be treated like a person. That man thought that he could kill them just because he is given the authority to kill. A life played by the hands of a fool.

It annoys him greatly. Knowing there are those who are undeserving of their life they currently hold.

Unbeknownst to Will is another person who looked at him with curious maroon eyes. Hannibal is not a bit concerned about the sudden drip of blood that came from Will's hands. No, he is more curious as to what happened. What brought Will's ire.

Knowing Will is not fully and consciously present, one could grab this opportunity to see what else lurked to the mind of the agent.

With Will's hands still clenched tightly, the blood drops speeden. He can feel something sharp and pointed that is pressing into his palms as he continues to clench his fist but he does not care. He wanted to feel something warm in his hands and yet he wanted to feel something more.

"What are you feeling Will?" A voice called. He recognized it to be Doctor Lecter as he opened his eyes to look at the man. But behind him he saw a creature from his dreams. A stag as black as the darkest night. With antlers crowning its head like a royalty.

A whimper escaped Will. "Outraged."

"Outraged to man I presume?" Doctor Lecter asked. The creature tilted its head as it accepted Will's response.

"Yes."

"Does his action spike the policeman part of your being?"

"No. I'm outraged at what he said."

The creature's eyes sparked in interest at his words. "Him getting his hands soaked in our blood. Being part of a cult brings a part of themselves where they could show their blood thirsty thoughts for their captives to feel. For the man, he must have felt like a god who controls the life of the one he controls."

The creature stared at him. Curious for his reply.

"He felt like he deserved to feel power. To feel that he is the one above them all. He felt like he is more than the one they will summon." Will's body heated more to the point he felt a lot more feverish.

What do the man deserve, Will?

Two voices echo. One that's been talking to him while the other is the familiar being that walks from his dreams. The one comes and goes until he believes that the time is right.

Will's eyes are filled with haziness but his consciousness makes his nerves feel like a live wire on how active he felt.

"He does not deserve his life." His hands unclenched themselves. Sharp claws reveals in all five of his fingers.

"He does not deserve the life given to him. He deserves far more than a peaceful death," The creatures agreed, onyx eyes looking at Will intently.

"Tell me Will, what does your soul truly want?" The voices of Hannibal and the creature blended, not knowing if those words came from his delusional mind or is it truly a question meant to assess his stability.

Even in his semi-conscious state his answer shows clarity, "His demise."

Hannibal's lips curved a minuscule smile from the answer. The creature purrs, satisfied.

"How will you show the fate of their demise?"

Will's mind thought of the question as he eyelids slowly shutted close. "He wanted to feel the blood of those lower than him. He sees them as nobodies, disposable. Weaklings. Easy to bend, easy to break under his will."

Will's voice sounds like it's coming from a stranger and yet the words he spoke comes with familiarity. The words lingering in his mouth is filled with a deeper sense of power that seem to shaken the small cell.

"He will receive what he brought to his own hand. He will be seen as lesser. A sacrificial pig for the chosen. He is undeserving of the privilege bestowed to him."

Everything feels numb and yet his nerves feels electrified. He's feeling jittery. One could say he is anxious with how he looked like.

His heart beat a second faster.

He felt like floating in an ocean. His body slowly going deeper until he is swallowed by the depth of the never-ending flow of the body of water. He is deep in the abyss, floating in the middle of the void.

And yet his mind felt alive.

"How will you do it?"

Blue eyes stared at the doctor. Curiosity leaked through the maroon eyes, curious to his reaction. His mind. His head hurts.

Thoughts run rampant in his brain. Whether it is an effect of an hallucination or the state of his consciousness that resulted in what he says next. He doesn't know. Does he?

"With my hand wrapped around his neck as a knife points steadily into his stomach, point facing upwards. They will not feel the warmth of their very essence as I will be the one who deserves it. A punishment, a payment for the sins he committed.

"It is my will that his life is given to me." Will growled. An inhumane sound erupted from him.

He doesn't know what resulted in him saying it. But Will knew it was true.

A sudden headache appears but he is just slightly unnerved. His right hand immediately goes upward. Sliding to his forehead towards the edge on his scalp. Light claws scratching at his skin as he felt a pointy object protruding in his head. It grew upwards slowly, like antlers. Like the creature he is looking at right now.

The creature grinned. Like it knew that will be the answer that comes out of Will.

Realization follows him as he looked at his hands. The dark claws coming from his fingertips screaming at him, begging at him to be used. To sink at flesh as to feel blood pouring at his hands, warmth enveloping him.

He knew something was wrong. Wrong in a way that he shouldn't be thinking these thoughts. But…

He couldn't stop thinking about it.

His mind conjures different ways. Ways of spilling the blood of the man. Of removing his intestines. Of clawing his organs. Of turning the man an example of what he would to those who enraged him—

Small hands grasping at the ground, wet. The floor filled with red, the whole room filled with an intoxicating coppery scent.

He looked above to see a large figure. A being filled with a large ebony crown placed at the top of the being. His heart beats.

A hoof steps forward onto the trembling child. Then a next step and the next until the being lowers it's head, now face to face to the child as the small child looked up, eyes staring to two black orbs.

Does this satisfy you, child?

Eyes dilated, he wearily shakes his head trying to remove these intrusive thoughts — a memory long forgotten? — to no avail. He looked at the man with a perturbing look, the one who he is with in the cell as he felt disturbed.

Disturbed on how undisturbed he is with his thoughts. Moreover, he could not resist not thinking those cogitations as the thought of blood and flesh slowly consumed him. And the fact that he enjoyed thinking about them.

With his mind still intact, a clutch for reality, he voiced his current thought. "I-I think somethings wrong with me Dr. Lecter."

The doctor slightly moves forward from his position, assisting him as he loses his balance sitting up. Eyes looking at him with what seems to be reverence.

His claws grasped at his hair —avoiding thinking that there are antlers in his head, with little to no success — pulling it to bring him back to his normal consciousness. Focusing on not

thinking about anything.

"What's happening to me?" Will thought as the tiredness of having those thoughts has catches up with him.

A hand touched his shoulder, making him lean on the warmth it produced. "I believe a transformation is what occurring to you dear Will." A smooth voice replied. "Sleep and let your consciousness guide you."

His eyes slowly close as the void is ready to take him into unconsciousness.

His heart beats.

A minute slower.

Chapter End Notes

Gosh 50 kudos? That's a lot more than I expected and I'm glad y'all are enjoying my dream-powered fic made by whatever my brain comes up with. The plot is progressing faster now and I'm honestly still thinking of a fitting ending for this story but nevertheless I hope you enjoy reading it.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!